

## Chapter 4

### Public Opinion on Public Land Management in Nevada

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***P**ublic lands, particularly the 87.5% owned by the federal government in Nevada, are vital to outdoor recreationists recreating in Nevada. The evidence available from the people of Nevada makes it very clear that access to public lands in Nevada and the management of these public lands is very important to them.*

- *There is a growing need to protect, maintain, and increase public access to public lands for the greatest diversity of outdoor recreation users. (Issue # 1 cited in Chapter 1 of this plan).*
- *84% of Nevadans participate in outdoor recreation activities (unpublished 2001 Citizens Survey).*
- *100% of the residents of Nevada living in urban areas say that the management of Nevada's public lands is very important (97%) or important (3%) to them (Huntsinger et al. 1997, 1).*

*99% of the residents of Nevada living in rural areas say that the management of Nevada's public lands is very important (98%) or important (1%) to them (ibid., 1).*

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#### Introduction

This chapter presents public opinions on various issues directly related to the number one issue in this plan. Public opinions presented in this chapter are cited from two primary sources.

The source used most extensively in this chapter is a study conducted by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension in 1997. Principal authors are Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. The report, titled **Nevada Public Lands and You**, surveyed Nevadans to determine their opinions about public lands in the state. The study looks at the opinions of residents of urban and rural areas. The report is cited as:

Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. **Nevada Public Lands and You: Urban vs. Rural Summary of a Survey of Nevada Citizens on the Uses, Management, and Decision Making Processes Related to Federal Lands in Nevada.**

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Reno, Nevada (First six pages of this report are not numbered, then the remainder of the report is numbered 1-17).

The 2001 Citizen's Survey conducted by the Nevada Division of State Parks, called **Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada**, serves as the second primary data

source. Details of the methodologies used to conduct these two surveys are presented in Appendix A—Planning and Research Methods of this plan.

## Preserving Public Lands and Historical Areas and Sites in Nevada

In the survey **Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada**, citizens in Nevada were asked about wilderness areas, natural areas, and Nevada’s historic areas and sites. Support among the general citizenry to preserve these areas in Nevada is strong. Their responses are presented in tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

Forty percent of Nevadans strongly agree with setting aside more designated wilderness areas in Nevada (table 4.1). Another 27 percent somewhat agree with the setting aside of more wilderness areas. Thus, 67% of Nevadans agree strongly or somewhat with the setting aside of wilderness areas. Twenty-one percent disagree, with almost 10% in somewhat disagreement and 11% strongly disagreeing. Another 12% neither agreed nor disagreed.

When asked “How important is it to you for unique or unusual natural areas to be maintained in a natural state, i.e., not developed?” 71% responded “very important” (table 4.2). Another 21% said it was “somewhat important” for these areas to remain in a natural state. Thus, 92% of the Nevada residents agree that unique or unusual natural areas should be maintained in a natural state, that is, not developed.

**Table 4.1**  
**Opinions of Nevada Residents, 16 Years Old and Older, on Setting Aside More Designated Wilderness in Nevada**

(Figures In Percentages) (N = 678)

Response Option	Percent
Strongly Agree	40
Somewhat Agree	27
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12
Somewhat Disagree	10
Strongly Disagree	11
Total	100

Source: James A. DeLoney. January 2003.  
*Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* (unpublished research).  
Planning and Development Section, NDSP.  
Carson City, Nevada.

**Table 4.2**  
**Opinions of Nevada Residents, 16 Years Old and Older, on Maintaining Unique or Unusual Natural Areas in Nevada in a Natural State**

(Figures In Percentages) (N = 680)

Response Option	Percent
Very Important	71
Somewhat Important	21
Neither Important Nor Unimportant	5
Somewhat Unimportant	1
Very Unimportant	2
Total	100

Source: James A. DeLoney. January 2003.  
*Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* (unpublished research).  
Planning and Development Section, NDSP.  
Carson City, Nevada.

When asked “How do you feel about setting aside Nevada’s historic areas, ghost towns, and other examples of its cultural heritage?”, 63% of Nevadan’s said it was “very important.” Another 30% said it was “somewhat important” to set aside these areas. Thus, 93% feel that setting aside Nevada’s historic areas and examples of its cultural heritage is either very or somewhat important (table 4.3).

<b>Table 4.3</b> <b>Opinions of Nevada Residents, 16 Years Old and Older, on Setting Aside Nevada’s Historic Areas, Ghost Towns, and Other Examples of Its Cultural Heritage</b> (Figures In Percentages) (N = 680)	
<b>Response Option</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	63
Somewhat Important	30
Neither Important Nor Unimportant	4
Somewhat Unimportant	1
Very Unimportant	2
Total	100

Source: James A. DeLoney. January 2003. *Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* (unpublished research). Planning and Development Section, NDSP. Carson City, Nevada.

A comparison of the responses to the three questions cited in tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 reveals that higher proportions of residents support the preservation of natural and historic areas than the setting aside of more wilderness areas. The reason for this difference may be explained in part by the unsolicited written comments made by survey respondents. Written comments indicate that Nevadan’s show relatively less

support for wilderness areas because of the lack of accessibility to wilderness areas to a variety of outdoor recreation and economic activities once they are designated as wilderness areas. The exclusion of motorized recreational vehicles in wilderness areas is a concern to some of the 29% of Nevadans who participate in some type of off-road vehicular activity in Nevada (DeLoney 2003). Nevadans did not express the same concerns about accessibility to natural and historic areas. Apparently, enough Nevadans do oppose various restrictions imposed by wilderness designations to make a difference in their responses. Overall, support for wilderness areas, natural areas, and historical sites is very strong in Nevada.

## Visitation to Nevada State Parks in the Year 2000

When Nevadan’s were asked if they visited a Nevada State Park during the year 2000, almost 58% responded yes. However, when asked to list the name of up to three Nevada State Parks they visited, only 39% of the respondents could list the name of at least one state park in Nevada. Thus, it can only be safely assumed that 39% of Nevadans did visit a Nevada State Park in the year 2000. Another 6% said they didn’t know if they had visited a Nevada State Park in the year 2000 (table 4.4).

Of those respondents who said they had visited a Nevada State Park in the year 2000, further analysis revealed that almost 46% correctly cited the names of all the Nevada State Parks they listed. Almost 51% incorrectly cited the name of at least one park by naming a site managed by an entity other than Nevada

State Parks. Almost 4% did not list the names of any parks.

**Table 4.4**  
**Nevadan's Visitation to Nevada State Parks During the Year 2000**  
 (Figures in Percentages)

Did you visit a Nevada State Park during the year 2000?

58%	Yes
36%	No
6%	Don't Know

If **yes**, please give the name, or names, of up to 3 (no more than 3) Nevada State Park(s) you visited *most often* during the year 2000.

Of the total number of respondents to this question,

- 39% listed the name of at least one Nevada State Park correctly
- 26% correctly cited the names of all Nevada State Parks they listed
- 16% did not list the names of any visited site that corresponds to one managed by Nevada State Parks

Source: James A. DeLoney. January 2003. *Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* (unpublished research). Planning and Development Section, NDSP. Carson City, Nevada.

Since visitors to parks in Nevada often do not know which agency administers the park they are visiting, Nevada State Parks and other governmental entities managing public lands in Nevada may have an identity problem with the public. Park visitors main concern may be how to access public lands to pursue outdoor recreation activities of their choice,

rather than to be able to identify the administering agency. If land management agencies improve the information on how the public can participate in outdoor recreation activities on public lands, support for public land administrators may improve.

## Nevada Public Lands and You

The study conducted by Huntsinger, et al, and published by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, is an in-depth treatment of public opinions on land issues in Nevada. Authors of the report urge caution in interpreting the results of the survey.

“Caution is urged in interpreting the results of this survey. It would be simplistic to take the results from one question, or a portion of one question, and draw sweeping conclusions from that portion of the survey. It may be tempting to observe that on a particular issue there are major differences in opinion among urban and rural respondents or, conversely, that because there is general agreement on several issues there should be no concern over the differences that may exist. The results from this survey will likely be viewed differently by different groups or interests, and this may be healthy as long as the results are used in a constructive manner rather than in a divisive manner. Recognizing these risks, the following discussion points out certain general observations that may be obtained from the data in the survey.” (p. 3).

For brevity's sake, respondents from urban areas will be referred to as

“urbanites” and respondents from rural areas as “ruralites.” In this study, URBAN represents the counties of Clark, Carson, Douglas, and Washoe. RURAL represents the other 13 remaining counties in Nevada. Responses to selected questions from the survey provide insights to actions land management agencies may wish to pursue.

### **Satisfaction With and Importance of Public Land Management in Nevada**

While 26% of the urban and 23% of the rural respondents were satisfied with the management of Nevada’s public lands, 39% of the urban and 54% of the rural residents were not satisfied. More urban respondents, 35%, were unsure of their satisfaction with the management of

**Table 4.5**  
**Are You Satisfied with the Management of Nevada’s Public Lands?**  
(Figures In Percentages)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
URBAN	26	39	35
RURAL	23	54	23

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. *Nevada Public Lands and You: Urban vs. Rural Summary of a Survey of Nevada Citizens on the Uses, Management, and Decision Making Processes Related to Federal Lands in Nevada*. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Reno, Nevada. Page 1.

Nevada’s public lands, than rural respondents, 23% (table 4.5). These findings have implications for the land management agencies in Nevada.

Fifty-five percent of the urbanites and 64% of the ruralites would like to be

more involved in addressing Nevada’s public land needs (table 4.6).

**Table 4.6**  
**Would You Like to Be More Involved in Addressing Nevada’s Public Land Needs?**  
(Figures In Percentages)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
URBAN	55	24	21
RURAL	64	15	21

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 1.

The majority of Nevadans do not believe that they are well informed about Nevada public land management. Fifty-one percent of the urbanites do not believe that they are well informed compared to 55% of the ruralites (table 4.7).

**Table 4.7**  
**Do You Believe You Are Generally Well Informed About Nevada Public Land Management?**  
(Figures In Percentages)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
URBAN	33	51	16
RURAL	34	55	11

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 1.

The management of Nevada's public lands is very important to Nevadans in both the urban and rural areas. In the urban areas, 100% of the urbanites said the management of public lands is either very important (97%) or important (3%) to them, compared to 99% of the ruralites who said the management of public lands is either very important (98%) or important (1%) (table 4.8).

<b>Table 4.8</b>		
<b>How Important is the Management of Nevada's Public Lands to You?</b>		
<b>(Figures In Percentages)</b>		
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>RURAL</b>
Very Important	97	98
Important	3	1
Not Important	0	1
Not Sure	0	0

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 1.

### **Public Opinions on the Use of Public Lands in Nevada**

Nevadans strongly support the "multiple use" concept of land management on public lands in Nevada. Of particular interest to the purpose of this plan are Nevadan's opinions on uses of public land for outdoor recreation activities. Large proportions (76%-95%) of both urban and rural residents agreed with hiking, camping, bicycle riding, horseback riding, wildlife habitat, and fishing as appropriate activities on or uses of public lands. A majority of Nevadans, 58% or urbanites and 82% of ruralites, agreed that hunting is acceptable on public lands (table 4.9).

Of the 11 uses of public lands posed to the respondents to the survey, off-road vehicle use received the least support (31%) from urban residents. Almost half (49%) of the rural residents agree with off road vehicle use on public lands. Only military testing and training received less support among rural residents than did OHV use on public lands. Military testing and training was the only use of public lands with more rural residents disagreeing than agreeing with this use of public lands, 38% and 32% respectively. Since this study was conducted years before the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by Arab terrorists, it would be interesting to ask citizens their opinion on the use of public lands for military testing and training once again. Future studies on public land use in Nevada should also include a question on the nuclear waste facility under construction in Nevada.

One of the most controversial issues in the United States is the Threatened and Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 through 1544). Opponents of growth of various types have used this act to halt major projects across the United States since its passage 30 years ago. Private landowners encounter restrictions on the use of their property because of the requirements levied in the Act. Certain outdoor recreation activities are restricted or excluded on public lands to protect threatened and endangered species and other wildlife. The **Nevada Public Lands and You** survey asked Nevadan's how much they agreed with statements addressing the management of endangered species. Table 4.10 presents Nevadan's responses to those questions.

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.9</b>  <b>Please Tell Us How Much You Agree that the Following Uses Are Acceptable on Our Public Lands</b>  (Figures In Percentages))</p>					
<b>Public Land Uses</b>		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
Hiking	URBAN	95	4	1	0
	RURAL	94	4	2	0
Camping	URBAN	95	4	1	0
	RURAL	94	4	2	0
Bicycle Riding	URBAN	86	10	3	1
	RURAL	76	17	6	1
Horseback Riding	URBAN	79	17	2	2
	RURAL	91	16	3	0
Hunting	URBAN	58	19	20	3
	RURAL	82	8	8	2
Fishing	URBAN	94	5	1	0
	RURAL	94	4	2	0
Off Road Vehicle Use	URBAN	31	30	36	3
	RURAL	49	18	30	3
Wildlife Habitat	URBAN	85	9	4	2
	RURAL	92	5	2	1
Livestock Grazing	URBAN	68	13	14	5
	RURAL	75	11	11	2
Mining	URBAN	35	31	29	5
	RURAL	67	17	13	3
Military Testing & Training	URBAN	36	21	36	7
	RURAL	32	27	38	3

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 2.

Over 90% of urban and rural residents agreed that “the economic health of rural communities and families should be considered in land management decisions,” and that “rural communities and family values should be considered in land management decisions.” Seventy percent of urbanites and 81% of the ruralites agreed that “the ranching heritage on our public lands is part of our history and should be protected.” Nevadans strongly agree that “we should reach a balance that equally considers both rural communities and the environment,” with 89% of the urbanites agreeing compared to 87% of the

ruralites. Nevadans strongly disagree with the statement “we should only be concerned about protecting our land and not about how land management decisions affect families, communities, or heritage values.”

Responses recorded in table 4.10 clearly show that Nevadans in both the urban and rural areas strongly support rural community and family values, our ranching heritage on public lands, and the economic health of rural communities and families. Nevadans believe a balance that equally considers both rural communities and the

environment should be reached.  
Nevadans do not support the application  
of land health standards currently  
employed by the Bureau of Land

Management and the U.S. Forest Service  
at the expense of families, communities,  
or heritage values.

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.10</b>  <b>The Threatened and Endangered Species Act Requires the Identification and Protection of Threatened and Endangered Species. Please Tell Us How Much You Agree with the Following Statements.</b>            (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
Statement		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Not Sure
We should manage to protect endangered species, regardless of social or economic consequences.	URBAN	47	13	37	3
	RURAL	23	12	64	1
Endangered mammal, bird, plant, and fish species are <u>more</u> important than insects and other species.	URBAN	44	17	37	2
	RURAL	39	22	35	4
We <u>should</u> manage our public lands for healthy ecosystems, and trust that endangered species will recover.	URBAN	66	13	14	7
	RURAL	70	15	13	2
We should <u>not</u> be concerned about endangered species.	URBAN	9	7	83	1
	RURAL	10	12	78	0
A person whose job, property or business is lost to protect an endangered species <u>should</u> be compensated.	URBAN	79	8	10	3
	RURAL	86	7	4	3
Interested citizens <u>should</u> be involved in planning for endangered species management.	URBAN	91	9	0	0
	RURAL	84	12	2	2

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 4.

According to results from **Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada**, 39% of Nevadans age 16 years old and older participated in wildlife viewing in the year 2000, making wildlife viewing the 5<sup>th</sup> ranked outdoor recreation activity in Nevada (table 3.4). According to results from the **1999-2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment**, almost 41% of Nevadans 16 years of age and older participated in viewing/photographing other wildlife, over 25% participated in

viewing/photographing birds, and 23% participated in viewing/photographing fish. These outdoor recreation activities are often referred to as non-consumptive activities.

In the year 2000, almost 34% of Nevadans 16 years old and older participated in lake fishing, almost 17% in stream fishing, almost 10% in game hunting, and almost 10% in bird hunting (table 3.5) (2001 Citizens Survey). Results from the **1999-2000 NSRE** study shows that almost 27%



participated in fishing, 25% in freshwater fishing, 20% in cold-water fishing 13% in warm water fishing, 6.3% in hunting, 5% in big game hunting, 4% in small game hunting, 4% in anadromous fishing, and .2% in ice fishing. These results show the popularity of wildlife outdoor recreation activities in Nevada.

According to survey responses shown in table 4.11, Nevadans could be better informed about public land wildlife habitat, mule and elk numbers, and the job that the Nevada Department of Wildlife is doing to manage wildlife. Unique to Nevada are the number of wild horses and burros, more than any other state. Although neither horses or

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.11</b>  <b>Most Wildlife and All Wild Horses in Nevada Are on Public Lands, Although Much Wildlife May Be on Private Lands All or Part of the Year. Please Indicate Your Agreement with the Following Statements.</b>            (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
Statement		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Not Sure
Public land wildlife habitat is improving.	URBAN	19	20	26	35
	RURAL	33	18	27	22
Mule deer numbers have <b>decreased</b> in the last 50 years.	URBAN	27	11	10	52
	RURAL	49	12	15	24
Elk numbers have <b>decreased</b> in the last 50 years.	URBAN	25	15	12	48
	RURAL	28	10	35	27
The Nevada Department of Wildlife is <b>doing</b> a good job of managing wildlife.	URBAN	27	30	13	30
	RURAL	25	21	40	14
Proper management can result in compatible use of land by both livestock and wildlife.	URBAN	79	9	7	5
	RURAL	92	4	3	1
Livestock might sometimes overgraze, but deer and elk never do.	URBAN	18	14	46	22
	RURAL	13	10	67	10
Hunting of some wildlife species is a useful management tool.	URBAN	79	7	7	7
	RURAL	89	5	5	1
Wild horses have as much right to graze on public lands as other animal species.	URBAN	69	12	16	3
	RURAL	58	13	28	1
Wild horses numbers should not be controlled.	URBAN	9	15	63	13
	RURAL	13	10	73	4
Wild horses <b>should</b> be managed to protect the land.	URBAN	70	14	6	10
	RURAL	74	9	13	4

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 7.

burros are native species in Nevada, they have been accepted by the general public. Over half of the residents of urban areas, 69%, and rural areas, 58%, agree that wild horses have as much

right to graze on public lands as other animal species. A strong majority of urbanites, 63%, and ruralites, 73%, agree that the number of wild horses should be controlled. Seventy percent of urban

residents and 74% of rural residents agree that wild horses should be managed to protect the land (table 4.11).

An overwhelming majority of Nevadans agrees that hunting of some wildlife species is a useful management tool, with 79% and 89% of urbanites and ruralites agreeing respectively (table 4.11). In table 4.9, 58% of urbanites and 82% of ruralites agreed that hunting is acceptable on public lands. While the figures for the rural residents are relatively consistent, the difference for the urban residents is significant.

Nevadans prefer decisions made by the two federal agencies owning and controlling the majority of the land in Nevada, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (USFS), be made at the state level, not at the national level. Eighty-five percent of the residents of urban areas and 89% of the rural residents disagree that management decisions should be made at the national level. A majority of urbanites, 59%, and ruralites, 75%, agree that Agency decisions should be made mostly at the local level to be fair to local people (table 4.12).

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.12</b>  <b>The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (USFS) Are the Federal Agencies Responsible for Managing Most of Nevada's Public Lands. Please Tell Us How Much You Agree with the Following Statements About How Public Land Management Decisions Should "Ideally" Be Made.</b>            (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
<b>Statement</b>		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
To make sure Agency decisions and practices are the same in all states, management decisions should be made mostly at the <b>national level</b> .	URBAN	10	5	85	0
	RURAL	4	4	89	3
To make sure Agency decisions and practices are right for each state, management decisions should be made mostly at the <b>state level</b> .	URBAN	79	7	14	0
	RURAL	74	8	17	1
To make sure Agency decisions and practices are fair to local people, management decisions should be made mostly at the <b>local level</b> .	URBAN	59	18	22	1
	RURAL	75	11	11	3
Informed citizens should be allowed to <b>work together</b> with Agencies to make public land management decisions.	URBAN	95	4	1	0
	RURAL	94	5	1	0
It is most important that public land use decisions are <b>fair to all the people</b> of the United States.	URBAN	69	9	20	2
	RURAL	53	17	28	2
It is most important that public land use decisions are <b>fair to the local people</b> most directly affected.	URBAN	77	11	11	1
	RURAL	82	9	9	0
It is most important that public land use decisions result in an <b>economic benefit</b> .	URBAN	37	21	38	4
	RURAL	30	21	45	4

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 8.

The strongest agreement of Nevadans is with the idea that “informed citizens should be allowed to work together with agencies to make public land management decisions,” with 95% of the residents of urban areas and 94% of rural residents in agreement. More Nevadans agree that it is more important that public land use decisions be fair to the local people than to all the people of the United States (see table 4.12). On the statement “It is most important that public land use decisions result in an economic benefit,” Nevadans are more evenly split on agreement and disagreement. Thirty-seven percent of the urbanites agree compared to 38% who disagree, with 21% remaining

neutral. Of particular interest is the response of the ruralites, with 30% agreeing compared to 45% who disagree, and 21% remaining neutral. Residents of rural areas may be more directly impacted by the loss of economic benefits on public lands than the residents of urban residents, thus, their response is somewhat surprising.

Public land management decisions and management policies are made with differing levels of input from various groups. Table 4.13 shows that residents of urban and rural areas in Nevada agree that public land issues decisions and management policies should be made with “greater input” from most groups.

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.13</b>  <b>Public Land Issues Decisions and Management Policies Are Made with Differing Levels of Input From Various Groups. Please Tell Us if You Think There Should Be Greater Input From Each of the Following Groups.</b>  (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
Statement		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Not Sure
Greater input from general public	URBAN	83	13	4	0
	RURAL	80	11	9	0
Greater input from local communities	URBAN	85	13	2	0
	RURAL	95	4	1	0
Greater input from environmental groups	URBAN	50	22	27	1
	RURAL	28	20	50	2
Greater input from wildlife organizations	URBAN	67	24	8	1
	RURAL	54	19	26	1
Greater input from agricultural interests	URBAN	61	24	14	1
	RURAL	73	16	10	1
Greater input from recreation interests	URBAN	68	21	10	1
	RURAL	65	20	14	1
Greater input from hunting and fishing interests	URBAN	68	20	11	1
	RURAL	69	20	9	2

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 9.

The one exception is greater input from environmental groups. Fifty percent of urban residents agree that there should be greater input from environmental groups, 22% were neutral, and 27% disagreed. In the rural areas, only 28% of the people agree that there should be greater input from environmental groups, 20% were neutral, and 50% disagreed. The difference between the residents of urban and rural areas in Nevada on this issue is significant.

Another issue is Nevadan's opinions on who should make public land management decisions. Differences

between the residents of urban and rural areas are significant on all but one of the five statements addressing this issue presented in the survey to the respondents. Residents of urban and rural areas agree that the federal government is not best able to protect and manage the natural resources on public lands. Seventy-one percent of the urban residents disagree that "the federal government is best able to protect and manage the natural resources on public lands, compared to 77% of the rural residents who disagree with this statement (table 4.14).

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.14</b>  <b>Please Indicate Your Level of Agreement with the Following Statements About Who Should Make Public Land Management Decisions.</b>  (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
<b>Statement</b>		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
Well-educated, trained <b>experts</b> should be in charge of decision making on public lands.	URBAN	62%	15%	22%	1%
	RURAL	26%	20%	50%	4%
Those <b>most affected</b> by public lands decisions should have the most influence on the decision.	URBAN	59%	19%	17%	5%
	RURAL	64%	13%	19%	4%
The <b>federal government</b> is best able to protect and manage the natural resources on public lands.	URBAN	14%	12%	71%	3%
	RURAL	9%	11%	77%	3%
<b>Local people</b> who are familiar with the public lands are best able to protect and manage them.	URBAN	55%	23%	18%	4%
	RURAL	71%	14%	13%	2%
The desires of the majority of the public should be followed in public land management, regardless of local or agency interests.	URBAN	27%	24%	46%	3%
	RURAL	23%	16%	59%	2%

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 11.

Both urban and rural residents agree that local people who are familiar with the public lands are best able to protect and manage them, with 55% of the urban residents in agreement compared to 71% of the rural residents. Only 14% of the

urban residents and 9% of the rural residents agree that the federal government is best able to protect and manage the natural resources on public lands. Fifty-nine percent of rural residents disagree with the statement that

“the desires of the majority of the public should be followed in public land management, regardless of local or agency interests.” Responses presented in table 4.14 clearly show that Nevadans favor local citizens and interests involvement in public land management decisions.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently in the process of selling certain public lands in Clark County in accordance with the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-263). The following information is cited from the BLM Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Website (<http://www.nv.blm.gov/snplma/default.asp> accessed September 27, 2003).

“The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) became law in October, 1998. It allows the Bureau of Land Management to sell public land within a specific boundary around Las Vegas, Nevada. The revenue derived from land sales is split between the State of Nevada General Education Fund (5%), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (10%), and a special account available to the Secretary of the Interior for:

- Acquiring environmentally sensitive land in the State of Nevada.
- Capital improvements at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

- Developing a multi-species habitat conservation plan in Clark County.
- Funding the development of parks, trails, and natural areas in Clark County, Nevada, pursuant to a cooperative agreement with a unit of local government.”

For more information on the SNPLMA land acquisitions, see the BLM website.

“The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to expend revenue in the Special Account for (among other things) the

*“Acquisition of environmentally sensitive land in Nevada, with priority given to lands within Clark County.”*

The Act grants the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to rule on whether land proposed for acquisition is ‘*environmentally sensitive*’, defined in the Act as:

*...land that would promote the preservation of natural, scientific, aesthetic, historical, cultural, watershed, wildlife and other values contributing to the public enjoyment and biological diversity; enhance recreational opportunities and public access; provide the opportunity to achieve better management of public land through consolidation of Federal ownership; or otherwise serve the public interests.*

The Bureau of Land Management facilitates a nomination and selection process that is designed to identify and prioritize land available from willing sellers according to the public benefits that would be derived if it were acquired and managed as a part of the public domain. The Fiscal Year 2001 strategic goals for land acquisitions funded by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act are:

1. Acquire in-holdings with significant natural resource values within the boundaries of:
  - Lake Mead National Recreation Area
  - Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
  - Spring Mountains National Conservation Area
  - Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
2. Support the recovery of threatened or endangered species and prevent the listing of at risk species in Southern Nevada by acquiring and protecting critical habitat
3. Protect the riparian areas associated with the Virgin River, Muddy River and Meadow Valley Wash that drain into the Overton arm of Lake Mead, provide habitat for the Southwestern Willow Fly-catcher and other at-risk species, improve the quality and quantity of the water flowing into Lake Mead, and provide a variety of recreational opportunities.

4. Enhance recreation opportunities and protect significant wildlife habitat (including threatened or endangered species habitat) in Nevada.

The SNPLMA provides a significant boost to the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in Clark County. To date, almost \$54 million has been *approved* for parks, trails, and natural areas, with over \$35 million of the total budget *allocated* for these types of projects (BLM 2003, page 6). These decisions made with cooperation between elected officials, local agencies, and federal agencies will help provide much needed outdoor recreation opportunities to meet the exploding population in Clark County, and is responsive to the previously noted desire of Nevadans for local partnering in the provision of outdoor recreation resources and facilities.

The SNPLMA authorizes the federal government to acquire sensitive environmental properties around the state. Nominating federal agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Nature Conservancy, Outside Las Vegas, Washoe County, and Milton Incorporated/Teberti have also submitted nominations.

The majority of the properties nominated for acquisition are located in Clark County pursuant to the provisions of the SNPLMA. Properties have also been nominated in Nye, Lyon, Storey, Washoe, Douglas, Carson City, Mineral, Esmeralda, and Humboldt counties. The definition of environmentally sensitive

lands as defined in the Act allows for a multitude of properties having outdoor recreation significance and relevance. Thus, the SNPLMA serves as a means to increase and improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout Nevada.

One of the questions in the **Nevada Public Lands and You** survey asked Nevadans to state their agreement or disagreement with the issue of federal government land ownership versus state ownership. Table 4.15 presents the responses to that question. The majority of Nevadans in urban areas, 60%, and rural areas, 74%, disagree with the statement that “The federal government should keep all of its lands and purchase more when possible. Twenty percent of the urban residents agreed with this statement compared to 10% of the rural residents.

Sixty-three percent of the urban residents disagreed with the statement that “The federal government should keep all of its lands, but not purchase any more land,” compared to 61% of the rural residents. The idea of the federal government giving some public land to the states, excluding parks, wildlife sanctuaries, wilderness areas, military bases, etc. was agreeable to 68% of the urban residents and 73% of the rural residents.

More people in rural areas, 43%, agreed than disagreed, 36%, that “Excluding unique lands, the federal government should give all public lands to the states.” Urban residents had a different response, with only 27% agreeing compared to 49% in disagreement.

Selling some public land, excluding unique lands, was more agreeable than

disagreeable, with 46% of the urban residents in agreement compared to 57% of the rural residents. Selling most public land, excluding unique lands, was not popular with Nevadans; 60% and 63% of the urban and rural residents, respectively, disagreed with this idea.

The analysis of table 4.15 shows that while Nevadans oppose the federal government expanding the total amount of land it owns in Nevada, they also oppose wholesale giveaways or sales of public lands. Excluding unique public lands, Nevadans strongly agree with the idea of giving some land to the states, and with the idea of selling some public lands such as BLM is doing under the SNPLMA (table 4.15).

### **Actual Use of Public Lands in Nevada**

Nevadan’s were asked how often they used public lands and which activities they carried out on Nevada public lands. Tables 4.16 and 4.17 present Nevadan’s response to these two questions.

Nevadans use public lands frequently either for business or pleasure (table 4.16). Ninety-three percent of the urban residents and 97% of the rural residents in Nevada used public lands at least once during the last year preceding the conduct of the survey. Fifty-eight percent of the rural residents reported that they use public lands more than 12 times during the last year.

Public lands are destinations for Nevadans to engage in outdoor recreation activities. Sightseeing is the most popular recreation activity, with 73% of the urban residents and 83% of the rural residents participating (table 4.17). Picnicking, camping, wildlife

viewing, fishing, and photography were also popular activities occurring on public lands. Urban residents engaged

the least in ranching, mining, and timber harvesting activities. Rural residents engaged the least in timber harvesting.

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.15</b>  <b>Legislation Has Been Enacted to Create Trust Funds to Purchase More Public Land. Legislation Has Also Been Proposed to Sell Certain Public Lands. Please Indicate Your Agreement with the Following Statements</b>            (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
<b>Statement</b>		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
The federal government should <b>keep all</b> of its lands and purchase more when possible.	URBAN	20	14	60	6
	RURAL	10	12	74	4
The federal government should keep all of its lands, <b>but not purchase</b> any more land.	URBAN	13	15	63	9
	RURAL	15	19	61	5
Excluding unique lands (parks, wildlife sanctuaries, wilderness areas, military bases, etc.), the federal government should give <b>some</b> public land to the <b>states</b> .	URBAN	68	12	15	5
	RURAL	73	9	18	0
Excluding unique lands, the federal government should give <b>all</b> public lands to the <b>states</b> .	URBAN	27	19	49	5
	RURAL	43	17	36	4
Excluding unique lands, <b>some</b> public land should be sold.	URBAN	46	19	29	6
	RURAL	57	10	27	6
Excluding unique lands, <b>most</b> public land should be sold.	URBAN	18	15	60	7
	RURAL	19	13	63	5

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 12.

<p align="center"><b>Table 4.16</b>  <b>How Often Have You Used Public Lands, Either for Business or for Pleasure, During the Last Year?</b>            (Figures In Percentages)</p>		
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>RURAL</b>
Not at all	7	3
Less than 6 times	34	17
6 to 12 times	24	22
Greater than 12 times	35	58

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 13.



<b>Table 4.17</b> <b>How Have You Used Public Lands During the Last Year? Please Check Any Activities You Have Carried Out on Nevada Public Lands in the Last Year?</b> (Figures In Percentages)					
Activity	URBAN (n = 84)	RURAL (n = 235)	Activity	URBAN (n = 84)	RURAL (n = 235)
Sightseeing	73	83	Off Road Vehicle	15	45
Camping	46	69	Hunting	14	40
Picnicking	55	64	Bicycling	19	14
Wildlife Viewing	49	74	Water Skiing	15	15
Fishing	37	57	Gathering Firewood	17	29
Photography	35	53	Ranching	1	13
Hiking, Backpacking	36	46	Mining	0	15
Boating	42	34	Timber Harvest	1	2
Swimming	37	33			

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 13.

Note: Data reflects percentage of county residents that engaged in the listed activity.

### Reaching Nevadans on Public Land Issues

To reach those who use public lands, one needs to determine which organizations the populace are members of, how they prefer to get information about Nevada's public lands, how much they trust sources of information about Nevada's public lands. Marketing specialists find these types of information useful to reach customers. The public is the customer to the land management agencies.

Table 4.18 presents data on the membership of urban and rural residents in Nevada in those organizations that have interests in public land issues. None of these organizations seem to be very popular with both urban and rural residents.

**Table 4.18**  
**Have You Been a Member During the Last 5 Years of Organizations that Are Actively Interested in Public Land Issues?**  
 (Figures In Percentages)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
URBAN	21	79
RURAL	28	72

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 14.

If the respondent checked yes, they were asked to check the organizations they belonged to on a list of organizations provided (table 4.19). With only 21% of the urban residents and 28% of the rural residents responding "yes" to the yes/no screening question, the "n" for the second part of this question was small. Conclusions based on the results should be used with caution.

**Table 4.19**  
**Percent of Respondents Belonging to Organizations**  
 (Figures in Percentages)

<b>Organization</b>	<b>URBAN</b> (n = 16)	<b>RURAL</b> (n = 64)
National Audubon Society	25	13
The Sierra Club	25	9
The Wilderness Society	31	6
The Nature Conservancy	25	8
Izaak Walton League	0	0
Earth First	6	2
People for the West	0	16
Nevada Cattlemen's Association	0	17
Nevada Wool Growers	0	2
Nevada Farm Bureau	6	25
National Wildlife Federation	19	9
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	0	14
Mule Deer Foundation	0	6
Bighorns Unlimited	6	2
Wild Horse Organization Assistance	0	9
National Rifle Association	0	5
Ducks Unlimited	0	9

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 14.

To inform citizens on public land management issues, we have to determine the appropriate means of communications to reach the public. The **Nevada Public Lands and You** report ask respondents to tell how they would prefer to get information about Nevada's public lands. Table 4.20 presents the responses to this question.

Table 4.20 shows that citizens prefer a variety of means of communications to receive information on Nevada's public lands. Some of the most "highly preferred" tools are newspaper articles, television—regular news and special

programs, general publications on public lands, and special publications on specific public land issues. Least preferred are public short courses on specific topics. When the percentages are combined for "highly preferred" and "moderately preferred," all the communications could conceivably reach about half or more of the intended audience, i.e., urban or rural residents. "Public short courses on specific topics" was highly or moderately preferred by 47% of urban residents. All other means of communications were highly or moderately preferred by at least 54% or the urban or rural residents in Nevada.

<p><b>Table 4.20</b>  <b>How Citizens Prefer to Get Information About Nevada's Public Lands</b>  (Figures In Percentages)</p>					
Communications Means		Highly Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Low Preference	Not Preferred
Newspaper articles	URBAN	49	34	11	6
	RURAL	49	36	10	5
Magazine articles	URBAN	28	41	21	10
	RURAL	29	43	22	6
Radio programs	URBAN	26	29	32	13
	RURAL	27	39	24	10
Television—regular news	URBAN	59	23	11	7
	RURAL	43	35	14	8
Television—special programs	URBAN	55	30	6	9
	RURAL	40	37	14	9
Public information meetings	URBAN	22	32	33	13
	RURAL	33	36	24	7
Public short courses on specific topics	URBAN	19	28	36	17
	RURAL	20	35	30	15
General publication on our public lands	URBAN	50	36	12	2
	RURAL	39	38	16	7
Special publication on specific public land issues	URBAN	58	23	18	1
	RURAL	49	35	10	6

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 14.

The most effective way to reach the citizens of Nevada would be to employ more than one means of communications. Further analysis of the responses to this question could identify which combination of communications available would be most effective to reach the public. Land management agencies typically manage public lands across the entire state. Communications media will vary from local to local. Thus, research would have to be conducted to determine which newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, etc., citizens prefer in the different areas around the state. The results would be extremely valuable to the land management agencies in Nevada.

One indicator of the importance of public land management issues in Nevada is the actions taken by the state's citizens during the last three years to influence land management or policy. Table 4.21 presents findings from six such questions posed to the respondents to the **Nevada Public Lands and You**. Most significant is influence public land views of the candidates had on the voters. Seventy-three percent of the residents of urban areas and 81% of the rural residents reported that they "Voted for or against someone based on their public land views. Thirty-six percent of urbanites and 29% of ruralites "Wrote, called, or met with an elected official about a public land issue."

**Table 4.21**  
**During the Last 3 Years,**  
**Have You Taken Any**  
**Action to Influence Public**  
**Land Management or**  
**Policy?**  
 (Figures In Percentages)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
URBAN	28	72
RURAL	54	46

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 20.

If the respondent checked yes, they were asked to check any actions that applied from a list of actions provided (table 4.22). With only 28% of the urban residents responding “yes” to the yes/no screening question, the “n” for urban residents for the second part of this question was small. Conclusions based on the results should be used with caution.

**Table 4.22**  
**Types of Actions Respondents Took to Influence Public Lands 3 Years**  
**Prior to the Conduct of the 1997 Survey**  
 (Figures in Percentages)

<b>Action</b>	<b>URBAN</b> (n = 22)	<b>RURAL</b> (n = 125)
Wrote, called, or met with an elected official about a public land issue.	36	29
Wrote, called, or met with a representative of BLM or Forest Service.	27	23
Participated in a public hearing about public land issues.	32	29
Wrote a letter to a newspaper expressing my opinion about a public land issue.	14	10
Vote for or against someone based on their public land views.	73	81
Contributed money or time to an interest group actively involved in public land issues.	23	34

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 14.

Trust between the citizens of Nevada and entities and officials entrusted to manage public lands is one of the most critical issues to discern. When asked, “...how much you trust the following sources of information about Nevada’s public lands”, no more than 17% of the residents of urban or rural areas “highly trusted” any source (table 4.23).

Elected officials are trusted the least for sources of information, receiving 0% from urban and rural residents in the “highly trusted” response category. Only 10% of urban residents and 18% of rural residents had “moderate trust” for elected officials. About one-third of urban and rural residents found elected officials “not trustworthy.”

<p><b>Table 4.23</b>  <b>Nevadans Trust in the Various Sources of Information About Nevada's Public Lands</b>  (Figures in Percentages)</p>						
<b>Information Source</b>		<b>Highly Trusted</b>	<b>Moderately Trusted</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Trust A Little</b>	<b>Not Trustworthy</b>
Land management agencies (Forest Service & BLM)	URBAN	11%	46%	14%	21%	8%
	RURAL	8%	31%	13%	25%	23%
Environmental organizations	URBAN	7%	30%	15%	30%	18%
	RURAL	5%	14%	14%	21%	46%
Commodity or producer organization	URBAN	1%	9%	37%	33%	20%
	RURAL	3%	23%	32%	21%	21%
Elected officials	URBAN	0%	10%	29%	29%	32%
	RURAL	0%	18%	19%	30%	33%
Cooperative Extension	URBAN	10%	32%	35%	16%	7%
	RURAL	17%	47%	23%	8%	5%
University and government agencies	URBAN	10%	51%	21%	11%	7%
	RURAL	14%	42%	22%	15%	7%
Nevada state government agencies	URBAN	2%	42%	28%	17%	11%
	RURAL	4%	33%	28%	23%	12%
Nevada Association of Counties	URBAN	7%	31%	38%	12%	12%
	RURAL	6%	40%	35%	10%	9%
General publication on our public lands	URBAN	10%	41%	27%	15%	7%
	RURAL	8%	27%	27%	19%	19%

Source: Lynn Huntsinger, Hudson Glimp, and Edwin Smith. 1997. Page 16.

Environmental organizations were the least trusted by rural residents for sources of information on public lands, with 46% reporting that they view environmental organizations as “not trustworthy.” Urban residents trusted environmental organizations more than rural residents, with 37% reporting that they were highly or moderately trusted.

Environmental organizations were the least trusted by rural residents for sources of information on public lands, with 46% reporting that they view environmental organizations as “not

trustworthy.” Urban residents trusted environmental organizations more than rural residents, with 37% reporting that they were highly or moderately trusted.

Cooperative Extension and university and government agencies found trust among urban and rural residents (table 4.23). The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management received votes of trust as sources of information about Nevada's public lands, with 57% of urban residents and 39% of rural residents either highly or moderately trusting these two federal agencies.

Nevada state government agencies were moderately trusted but not highly trusted by urban and rural residents.

## Conclusions

Ninety-nine percent of the residents of Nevada living in rural areas and 100% of the residents in urban areas reported that the management of Nevada's public lands is very important or important to them (Huntsinger et al. 1997). Eighty-four percent of Nevadans reported that they participate in outdoor recreation annually (DeLoney. 2003). The number one outdoor recreation issue cited in chapter 1 of this plan states that "There is a growing need to protect, maintain, and increase public access to public lands for the greatest diversity of outdoor recreation users (Issue # 1 cited in Chapter 1 of this plan). Given these facts, public lands in Nevada are one of the State's most valuable resources in meeting the public outdoor recreation demand.

Nevada is a unique place for outdoor enthusiasts to recreate because the vast majority of lands in Nevada are available for outdoor recreational use. Public lands in Nevada managed for outdoor recreational use are administered by federal, state, and local governmental agencies. Of the 50 states, only Alaska

has more total acres of federal lands than Nevada. Major federal agencies administering lands for outdoor recreational use include the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service manage millions of acres of land in Nevada that is open to the public for outdoor recreational use. The National Park Service operates major national parks such as the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Great Basin National Park that accommodate millions of outdoor recreationists annually. The Nevada Division of State Parks manages and operates 24 state parks offering outdoor recreation opportunities to the public. Local governmental entities provide intensely developed parks to meet the demand for outdoor recreation occurring in urban areas close to the recreationist's home.

All levels of government in Nevada are important providers of outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands. With the high level of interest in outdoor recreation activities in Nevada and the rapid population growth in Nevada presented in Chapter 2 of this plan, the management of public lands will continue to be an important issue with Nevadans.